

Get Out

The week's pocket picks

By SAMANTHA SAULT



Pick of the pack

Photography American Cool

The British are proper. The French have that certain *je ne sais quoi*. And Americans? We're cool. But what exactly does that mean? You know "cool" when you see it, but according to the Smithsonian's latest exhibit, it's specifically defined as "rebellious self-expression, charisma, edge, and mystery." Opening Friday at the National Portrait Gallery, "American Cool" explores the idea of "cool" and its distinctly American roots through photographs of the coolest icons in our history — from the first distinctly "cool" celebrities like Fred Astaire and Dorothy Parker, to counterculture icons like Andy Warhol and Patti Smith, to modern-day rebels Jay-Z and Jon Stewart. Included are 94 other artists, writers, film stars, sports legends, and political activists who contributed to American culture. Some of America's coolest photographers such as Annie Leibovitz, Richard Avedon, and Diane Arbus are displayed, and music by some of the featured musicians is played in the galleries. **Through Sept. 7 at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, 8th St. & F St. NW. 202/633/1000. Web: npg.si.edu.**

Theater

We Are Proud to Present

If you get tongue-tied around your Valentine, you better rehearse if you plan to invite him or her to see the Woolly Mammoth's latest play. Opening Monday, "We Are Proud to Present a Presentation about the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known As South West Africa, From the German Sudwestafrika, Between the Years

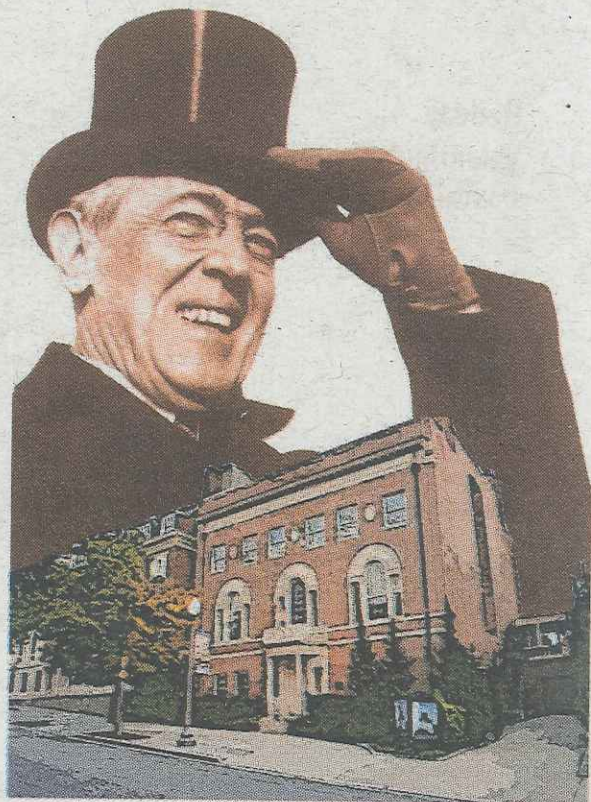


1884-1915" (or "We Are Proud to Present" for short) follows a group of three black actors and three white actors as they attempt to tell the true story of the German occupation of South West Africa. In 1884, Germans colonized the area, now called Namibia, and relations between the original inhabitants and the colonists were strained, to say the least. In 1904, the Herero tribe rebelled, leading to as many as 100,000 tribesmen dead at the hands of the Germans or due to exile in the desert. As the actors become invested in the overarching story, their characters' stories and secrets emerge — and tensions rise. **Through March 9 at the Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, 641 D St. NW. 202/393-3939. Web: woollymammoth.net.**

Cocktails

Speakeasy Bash

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson vetoed the Volstead Act, otherwise known as the National Prohibition Act. Congress overrode his veto, ushering in a 13-year ban on the sale, production and importation of alcohol. On Thursday, cocktail aficionados can attend a speakeasy-style party at the Kalorama mansion where Wilson and his wife lived after the White House. Enjoy live jazz by Laissez Foure, swing dancing demonstrations by the Jam Cellar, a 1920s costume contest, and prohibition-era cocktails featuring Sloop Betty Vodka, which is produced at Blackwater Distilling in Maryland. Get an close look at the home and its collections of furniture and art, including the



Wilson's wine cellar that's rarely open to the public. Proceeds benefit the Woodrow Wilson House's programs. **Thursday at the President Woodrow Wilson House, 2340 S St. NW. 202/387-4062. Web: woodrowwilsonhouse.org.w**



Exhibit Monuments Men & the National Gallery of Art

“The Monuments Men,” starring George Clooney, Matt Damon, Bill Murray, and Cate Blanchett, opens Friday in movie theaters — but before you see the film, get inside knowledge about the real art-experts-turned-officers in the Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives program and how they worked with the National Gallery of Art during World War II. On Tuesday, the Gallery will debut an exhibit that tells the story about how it lobbied for the program before the war and worked behind the scenes to help the officers save hundreds of European masterpieces that would have been stolen or destroyed. The exhibit includes photographs, documents, and other never-before-exhibited items. On March 16, the Gallery will host a free lecture by curators and Lynn H. Nicholas, author of “The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe’s Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War.” **Through Sept. 1 at the Smithsonian National Gallery of Art, 9th St. & Constitution Ave. NW. 202/737-4215. Web: nga.gov.**

Holiday Valentine’s Day at the Postal Museum

This Valentine’s Day, you might get a Snapchat or Tweet — or, if you’re lucky, a romantic email. But there’s still nothing that will make you feel as special as receiving a Valentine card or handwritten letter. This week, the National Postal Museum will host two events to explore the lost art of sending snail mail to your Valentine. On Saturday, the museum will offer a family-friendly card-making workshop, with all the supplies (including Valentine stamps) to send handmade greetings to your loved one. On Thursday, the museum will host an early Valentine’s Day celebration — an after-hours event for ages 21+ featuring DJ Trayze, dancing, a photo booth, themed crafts, and more. Don’t miss a special presentation by Story League, a storytelling troupe that will perform skits based on the Craigslist “Missed Connections” website — and maybe make a connection of your own over the bar. **Card-making workshop on Saturday, Feb. 8, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m., and party on Thursday, Feb. 13, at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, 2 Massachusetts Ave. NE. 202/633-1000. Web: postalmuseum.si.edu.**

